

STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

By R. van der Riet

An essay submitted for the subject
Visual Communication III

Faculty of Human Sciences

Technikon Free State



I hereby declare that the work contained in this mini-thesis is my own independent work and that all sources consulted or sited have been indicated in full.

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Signature

18 - 11 - 2001
Date

HISTORY OF STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

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1.

PREFACE

Since the earliest days, photography has held out a promise no other medium could match. Being faster than the hand or even the eye, at capturing physical detail.

INTRODUCTION TO STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

Street photography can be defined as a practice of soliciting subjects for impromptu portraits done on the street. The photographer trying to document the social portrait without being noticed by their subjects - people going about their business unaware of the photographer's presence, candid pictures of everyday life.

Street photography is a kind of photography that tells us something crucial about the nature - human nature, life in the level we understand it.

The combination of the instrument, a camera and the subject - the street, yields a type of picture that is idiosyncratic to photography in a way formal portraits, landscapes and other forms are not.

While experimentations were made possible by photography - those performed by Eadweard James Muybridge and Etienne-Jules Marey or events documented in photojournalism may yield more information, but Street photographers use the capacity for information more imaginatively.

They think about this attribute of photography more profoundly than anyone else.

There are two sides to street photography - a paradox to which the photographers are very sensitive.

On the one hand, they try to get as many shots that they can get of a rapidly moving and changing subject, allowing them to strive for the one singular image - perfect in composition.

On the other hand, they might make purposely open-ended, unbalanced pictures that can't stand alone and need to be played off on another, in groups, or runs in books.

There are more technical details to this kind of photography. Motion blur can be used to the photographer's advantage. It can be a way to express energy on the street. A blurry picture of a fussy child, or a woozy picture of an old woman, can convey the 'feeling' of the image.

The tradition of street photography is a diffuse, fragmented, intermittent one. But it is a tradition nonetheless - a succession of influences and inheritances. There are certain pictures, such as Paul Strand's *Blind Woman* of 1916 that everybody

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who took up street photography thereafter appear to have seen and been affected by it.

This essay covers the history of portraits, which I believe was the first step towards the basic street photography. What started as an image taken for e.g. sentimental keepsakes and historical recording developed into a search of the human's inner being... captured on film.

The profile on Henri Cartier-Bresson serves as an example of a photographer that took picture of the 'moment of truth' and not out of routine.

2. HISTORY OF PORTRAITS

It all started in the year of 1839....

Two remarkable processes that would revolutionize our perceptions of reality was announced separately in London and Paris.

The two systems involved the application on long recognised optical and chemical principals. But aside from this they were only superficially related.

The outcome of one process was a unique, unduplicable, laterally reversed monochrome picture on a metal back. A Daguerreotype - named after one of its inventors, Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre.

The other system produced an image on paper that was also monochromatic and tonally, as well as laterally reversed - negative.

When placed in contact with another chemically treated surface and exposed to sunlight, the negative image was transferred in reverse, resulting in a picture with normal spatial and tonal values. The result of this procedure was called photogenic drawings and evolved into the Calotype, or Talbotype: named after its inventor, William Henry Fox Talbot. Talbot's negative-positive process was initially less popular than Daguerre's unique picture on metal.

Virtually from the beginning, photography has been involved with portraiture, continuing in a new medium: the impulse to represent the human form that goes back to the dawn of art. From the Renaissance on, portraits have been more esteemed when the portrayed was not only the sitter's physical appearance, but portrayed the inner character, as well. (Rosenblum 1981:2).

2.1 More about the History of Portraits

Before photography was invented, however, artists already had devised methods to respond to the demand for portraits from a new clientele emerging as a result of the rise of bourgeois societies in England, France, Holland and America from the 17th century. Earlier, the painted portraits had been largely the privilege of aristocrats and the very wealthy.

By the mid-19th century, in addition to the large officially sanctioned portraits of royalty and public figures that still were being commissioned the miniature, the silhouette, the physionotrace, the 'camera lucida' and finally the photograph had arrived to accommodate the needs of new patrons of likenesses. The miniature was painted in full colour, often on an ivory surface, were usually enclosed in elegant cases or inserted in locket. The silhouette was considered the poor man's miniature, though it was not always small. (Rosenblum 1981:5).

2.2 Daguerreotype Portraits

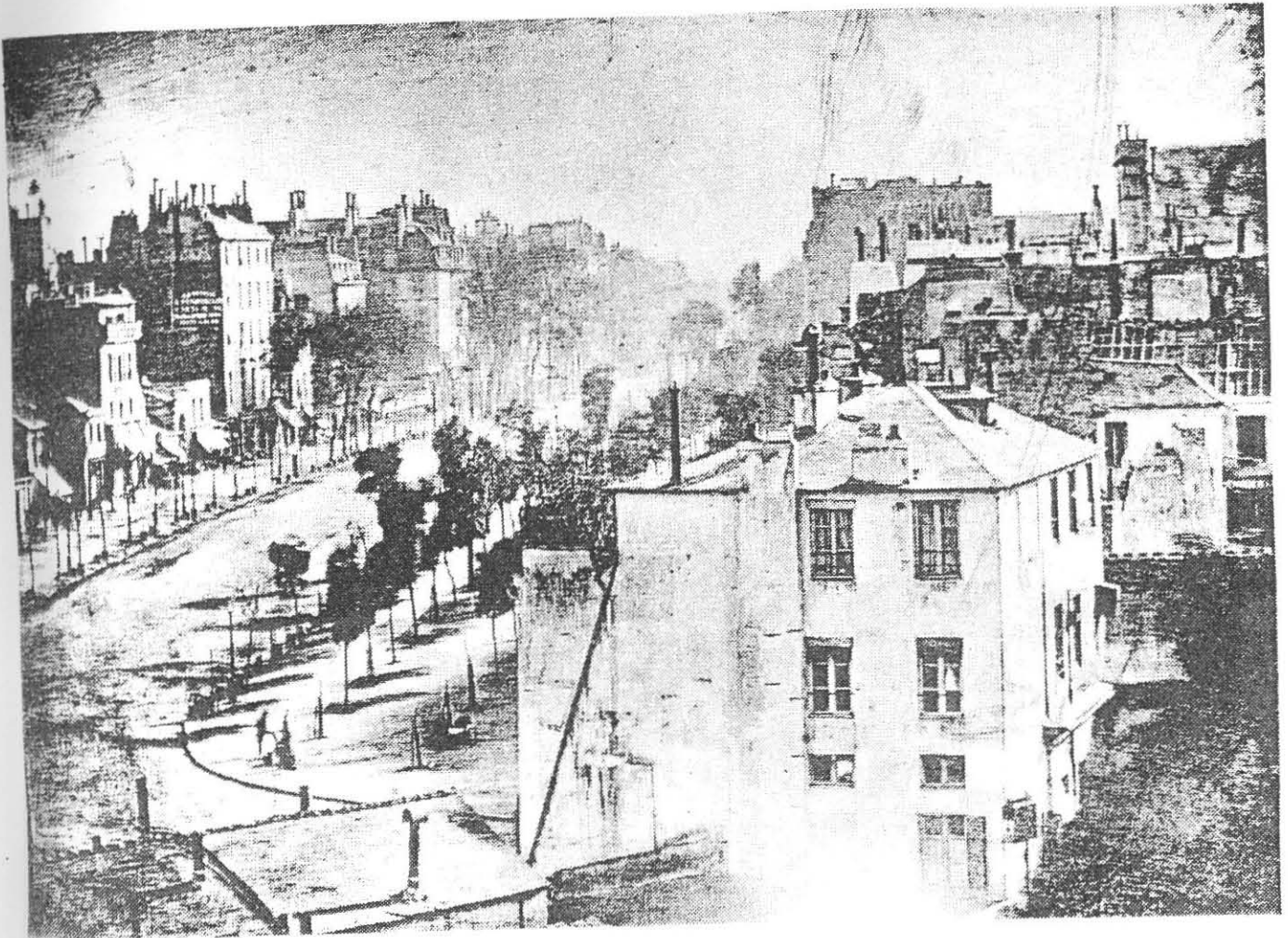
When first announced, the process weren't capable of being used to make portraits. In 1839, sittings required about 15 minutes of rigid stillness in blazing sunshine, owing to the primitive nature of lenses uses and insufficient sensitivity to light of the chemically treated paper and plates.

But the people in Europe and America did not give up to find the improvements that would make commercial daguerreotype portraits possible. Among the means used were the reduction of plate size, the improvement of lenses (faster portrait lenses, designed by Viennese scientist: Josef Max Petzval, the use of mirrors to reverse the plate's laterally inverted image back to normal. The shortening of exposure times by, the addition of chemical accelerants in the sensitizing process and the toning of the plates.

These improvements did make photography on street level possible.

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This is an example of the early Daguerreotype images:



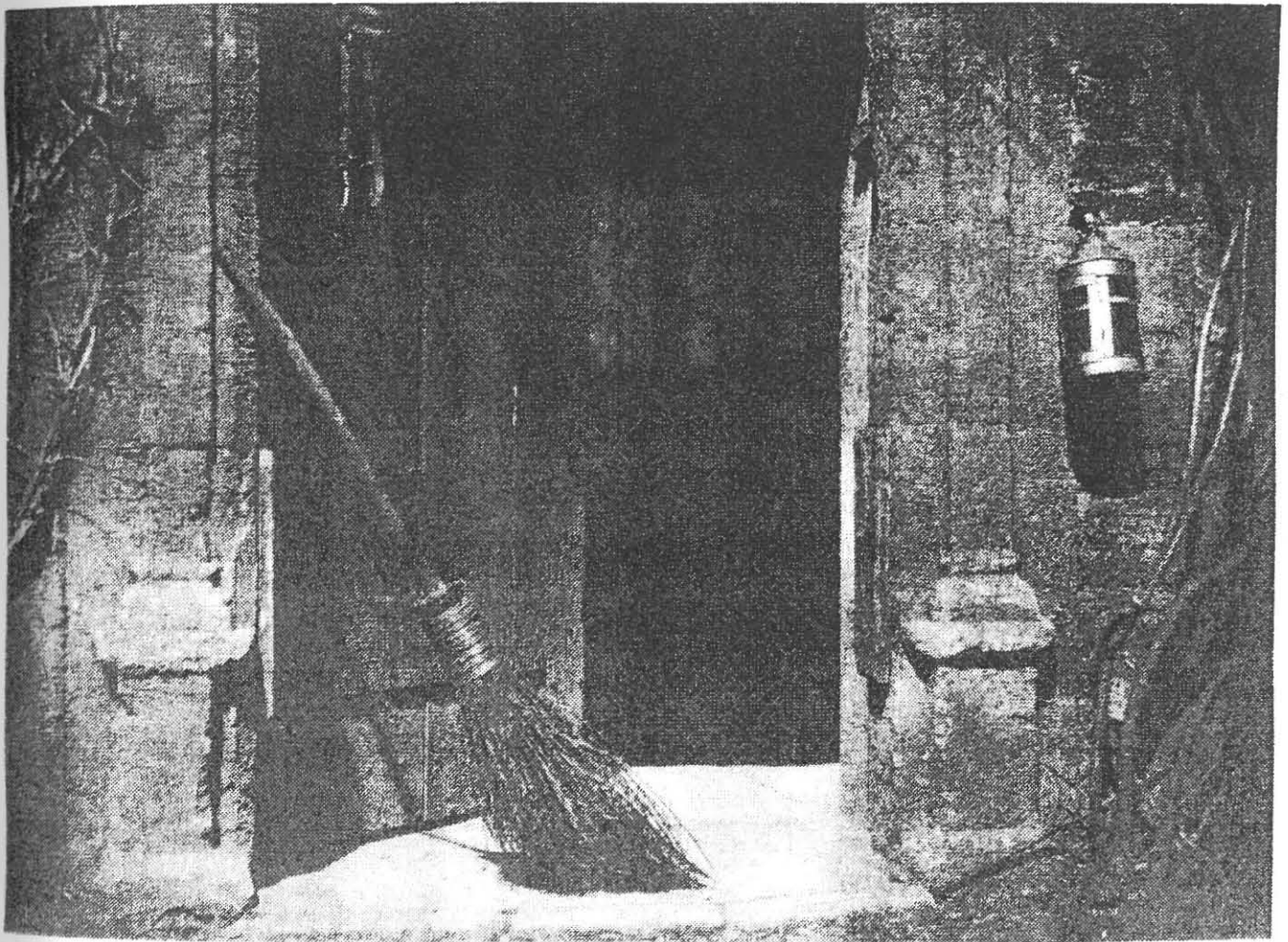
LOUIS JACQUES MANDE DAGUERRE. *Boulevard du Temple, Paris, c. 1838*
Daguerreotype. Bayerisches Nationalmuseum, Munich.

2.3 Calotype Portraits on paper

Calotype portraiture never achieved the commercial popularity of the daguerreotype. Talbot's first success in portraying the human face occurred in October 1840, when he made a number of close-ups of his wife, Constance. But the Calotype likenesses were indistinct and needed considerable retouching... this of course made the calotype unsuitable for street photography.

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This is an example of the early Calotype on paper images:



WILLIAM HENRY FOX TALBOT. *The Open Door*, 1843. Salted paper print from a calotype negative. Fox Talbot Collection, Science Museum, London.

2.4 Collodion Portraits

For commercial portraits, Frederick Scott Archer's invention of the Collodion negative seemed at first to solve all problems. The glass plate made possible both sharp definition and easy duplication of a numbers of prints on paper from one negative.

Collodion opened up an era of commercial expansion and made the life of the street photographer of the future much easier and commercial.(Rosenblum 1981:8).

When the introduction of fast gelatine dry film led to the development of the small camera; it became possible to hold the camera in the hand, instead of mounting it on a tripod all the time. Miniature cameras were very popular in the late 1880's and the famous Kodak Box-camera heralded the era of the snapshots, candid photography and photojournalism.

When the Leica with its wide aperture lenses was invented, photographer's were able to take pictures using available light, pictures of people in everyday situations, or shots of dramatic occasions that made news, could be taken.

In photographic terms 'candid' means spontaneous unrehearsed and reportage.

Photographers invaded very private areas in order to get a picture.

Candid subjects and events are likely to be only momentary, the photographer should anticipate them and have the camera ready to catch the fleeting moment. The focus, aperture and shutter speed should all be pre-set so that no time is lost.

Here follows a profile of a street photographer's life.

3. THE UNSEEN CAMERA

Henry Cartier-Bresson

Born on August 22, 1908, in Canteloup, outside Paris, Cartier-Bresson was steeped in the arts at a very young age. Henri's mother was from Normandy, his father a bourgeois Parisian textile magnate, a frugal but very wealthy patrician. His uncle whom he referred to as my 'other father', was a painter. Cartier-Bresson began reading modern literature - Dostoyevsky, Rimbaud, Proust and Joyce - at a young age and began to study painting seriously as a teenager. In 1927 he began to study with Andre Lhote, a rather conservative Montparnasse painter best known as an educator, his worse goal was to connect modern art with the great traditions of French painting. He acquired his first camera as a child, a Box Brownie. He was a natural who produced some of his best pictures in 1929, experimenting and looking intently at isolated details found in shop windows of lying about on the street.(www.washingtonpost.com).

As Cartier-Bresson came to age in Paris, many European avant-garde artists were breaking both aesthetic and psychological taboos, subverting artistic and literary traditions. There was an atmosphere of both collaboration and debate in Parisian cultural circles. Cartier-Bresson's interest in the arts, which exemplified his rebellious idealism and connections to Surrealist writers and painters, was a form of defiance for the well-off youth.

In the summer of 1932, a young American, Julien Levy, (who was scouting in Paris for his New York Gallery) met Henri at a Sunday afternoon gathering at Caresse Crosby. A little more than a year later Levy was to give Cartier-Bresson his first show. But Levy felt the photographs were so unusual that the American public would need some preparation. Under the pseudonym Peter Lloyd he wrote himself a letter about Cartier-Bresson. This he published as a catalogue essay for that first show.

"Call the exhibition amoral photography, equivocal, ambivalent, anti-plastic, accidental photography." (www.washingtonpost.com).

Cartier-Bresson's pictures are without the contrast of bright light and deep shadows. He preferred gray days. It allowed him to move freely around his subjects. The Cartier-Bresson photograph did not have a specific story to tell, no obvious moral. The content, like the print, of the picture has a neutral tone. His observations of human nature was neither misanthropic no philanthropic.

Although a typical Cartier-Bresson photograph doesn't contain a clear incident, there is usually a lot going on. Cartier-Bresson always seized upon the action.

Cartier-Bresson also was very meticulous about details, as details provides the formal structure. But even more importantly is, if the details are to count, the focus must be accurate enough to reveal them. On his large exhibition prints one is often struck by how approximate the focus is. It is because in many instances he would have lost the picture had he stopped to fiddle with the camera. The sharpness comes from the accuracy of the placement, rather than the crispness of the edges.

Cartier-Bresson has said that the photographer himself is revealed more clearly by his contact sheets than by the prints. On his own sheets you can see the sequence of the shots building towards the best pictures. When younger photographers ask to show him their work, it is only the contact sheet he wants to see... because it reveals the individual.

According to Ernst Haas, the moment truly typical of street photography is the 'decisive moment'. Work that is *'perfect in their imperfection'*.

The act of photography is a compulsive and involuntary one. Cartier-Bresson was able to flit unnoticed through every situation, because his reflexes were so quick, that he seemed to anticipate the course of events.

By his mid teens he was already unsuited to be heir of the wealthy family of thread merchants into which he was born. When he failed his baccalaureate for the third time, his father gave up hope of bringing him into the family firm.

Instead Cartier-Bresson set off on a journey around Africa in 1931. On the Ivory Coast he jumped ship where he spent a year in the bush hunting by the light of acetylene torches. On his return to France, after contracting a case of blackwater fever, all of his film was ruined by moisture. He returned aboard the *Saint-Firmin* and was never to return to Africa again.

A few years later, during a year in New York, he studied film making with Paul Strand, he never left Manhattan and took no pictures at all.

Therefore you have to conclude that the reason his photography were so good. when he did make them, was that they were a somewhat incidental part of his experience. Although nervous by nature, he wasn't anxious not about taking photographs, anyway.

Surrealism provided a context in which Cartier-Bresson's photographs made sense, or rather in which the nonsense they make seemed appropriate. It proposed a new way to think about photography, as a kind of found art.

The early 1930's through the late 1940's was the period when Cartier-Bresson's political consciousness was formed. When Britain and France declared war on Germany in 1939 (World War II), he enlisted and was made a corporal in a film and photo-unit. In the early summer of the following year, he was captured in the Vosges Mountains on the day that the armistice with the Germans was signed, articles agreeing to leave the French POW's in German Custody until peace was conducted on all fronts. The French General Staff was convinced the war would be over in a few weeks, but it was a miscalculation and a million and half Frenchman was sent to German prison camps for the next four years.

Cartier-Bresson, however, was not one of them. Incapable of sitting still, he escaped after three attempts in three years. He got back to Paris with the aid of false papers and soon landed a contract for a book about French artists, and unrealised project that nonetheless produced some of his greatest portraits.

During the war, he took up film making again, doing underground work to document the German occupation of Paris. After that he was sponsored by the U.S. Office of War Information to do a documentary called 'Le Retour', about displaced persons and POW's finding their way home again. But all this only made him realize that photography was a more powerful medium for him.

Resuming his interrupted career as a photojournalist, he helped form the Magnum picture agency in 1947. Assignments for major magazines took him on global travels, across Europe and the United States, to India, Russia and China. Many books of Cartier-Bresson photographs were published in the 50's and 60's, the most famous being the 'The Decisive Moment' (1952). A major milestone in his career was a massive, 400-print retrospective exhibition, which toured the United States in 1960.

There is a question that Cartier-Bresson is posing in his work: the answer lies inside the photographer. He tells us that we cannot comprehend a subject's "interior silence". Without this silence coming from the artist himself, from the connection of his mind, eye and hand. Yet this connection - of thought vision and action - is inherently present in his photographs. By using the camera like a pencil or brush, a true extension of interior thinking, he come close in the pictures to perceiving what is behind the mask of the face. (www.washingtonpost.com).

One of Cartier-Bresson's best-known picture portrays writer and philosopher Jean-Paul Satre, bundled in an overcoat against the cold, standing on a bridge, lost in thought and looking out past and beyond the photographer. It is through this one photograph that most of the world knows Satre. He is clearly in conversation with

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another man visible on the right edge of the image. One feels the weight of their thoughts, but it is the sense of silence, the lack of any imagined sound, that shrouds this image in mystery. Its representation of this void, a visual translation of "silence" is right of the surface. (Westerbeck & Meyerowitz 1994:157).

CONCLUSION

This is but a peak into the life of who was considered one of the most famous photographer in the world at one time, and there were countless of other brilliant street photographers, such as Lucien Aigner, Andre Keresz, Manuel Alvarez Bravo, Weegee (Athur Fellig), Diane Arbus and countless others.

But all of this comes down to what can be called as the 'decisive moment', the uncertain turn of events. Every street photography must be ready for all aspects.

"The "Decisive moment" is the American edition of Cartier Bresson's best known book, published in 1952.

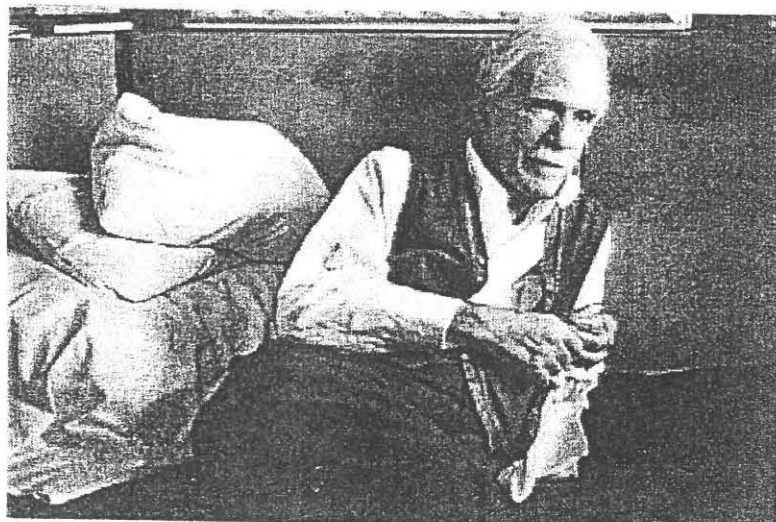
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PHOTOGALLERY

PLATE 1.



PLATE 2.



13.

PLATE 4.



12.

PLATE 3.



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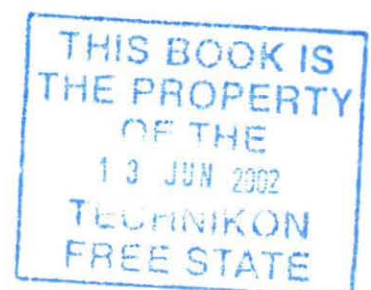
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5. <http://washingtonpost.com>
6. <http://www.photo-seminars.com>
7. <http://apphoto.8m.com>

PHOTOGALLERY

- Plate 1. Title: Jean Paul Satre
1949
<http://washingtonpost.com>
- Plate 2. Title: Alfred Stieglitz
1946
<http://www.photo-seminars.com>
- Plate 3. Title: Rue Mouffetard, Paris
1952
<http://www.photo-seminars.com>
- Plate 4. Title: Place de l'Europe, Paris
1932
<http://www.photo-seminars.com>



WORKING ENVIROMENT OF A STREET PHOTOGRAPHER

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1. INTRODUCTION

The working environment of a street photographer consists of many aspects: from knowing how to work with your clients, cost and accounting; to having the knowledge of the boundaries and laws set as to what and where you can photograph. In other instances photography helped to change the law to better conditions.

Jacob Riis used photographs to make people aware of the human suffering immigrants endured in the city slum areas of New York. His recorded scenes of immigrant poverty shocked and goaded the public into action and reform (Kobre 1980:12).

Lewis Hine took portraits of newly arrived immigrants at Ellis Island, in 1908. That same year he began to work for the National Child Labour Committee and his pictures helped to get the new Child Labour Laws passed by Congress in America (Kobre 1980:14).

This essay is going to focus mainly on the law aspects street photographers are submitted to in his/her environment and how they used these aspects to make people aware of them. But also the conditions they had to endure while working in the environment.

All Photographers, whether professional or amateur, enter into contracts. Photographers may be employed or may employ others; and all photographers, professional or not, owe the same duties to the rest of society as others do, and have the same rights in return.

2. BACKGROUND

To begin with, there is the question: "What is the Law?"

Attempts to answer this question, have spawned countless volumes of legal philosophy and centuries of debate among legal theorists.

The law is one of the major influences on the life of the everyday person in the country. It is a controller, a protector and a regulator. The 'Law' can be seen as an immensely sophisticated set of rules and regulations for administering the complex relationships between fellow individuals and between the individuals and the state. (Crone 1995:67).

BASIC LEGAL CONCEPTS

A short summary of the example of the English Legal System (Berekely 1993:7):

2.1 SOURCES OF THE LAW

Common Law

Local Custom

Equity

Legislation

European Community Law



2.2 DIVISIONS OF THE LAW

There are various “divisions of law”, some of which are more meaningful for our purposes than others. Common divisions of law are:

Criminal and Civil Law
Private and Public Law
Public International Law and Private International Law
Substantive Law and Procedural Law
Common Law and Stature Law

2.3 STRUCTURE OF COURTS

- a) Criminal Courts - Magistrate' Courts
- Crown Courts
- b) Civil Courts - County Courts
- High Courts
- c) Appeals - Appeals in Criminal Courts
- Appeals in Civil Courts

Every journalist or photographer should have a sound knowledge of his country's legal system.

A short summary of the example of the English Legal System (Berkely 1993:7).

3. COPYRIGHT LAW

The professional street photographer is hardly likely to have a staff lawyer. Therefore, in addition to your skill, you have to have a good idea of potential legal problems.

As referred to by (Duboff 1989:3) - a Copyright is actually a collection of five exclusive rights. .

1. The right to reproduce a work by any means. Under the Copyright Act of 1976, somebody may reproduce protected works only if such reproduction involves either fair, or an exempted use as defined by the Act.

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2. The right to prepare derivative works based on the Copyrighted work. A 'derivative' work is one that transforms or adapts the subjects matter of one or more pre-existing works. Derivative works of a photograph might include use in a composite, as well as adaptations into mediums such as television, film or painting.

3. The right to distribute copies to the public for sale or lease. However, once a photographer sells a print, the right to control the further use of that very print, is ended.

4. The right to perform the work in public, e.g. in the case of an audio/visual work – to broadcast a film on television.

5. The right to display the work in public. Once the copyright owner has sold a copy The photograph, however, the owner of the copy has the right to display that copy. But generally does not have permission to reproduce it (Duboff 1989:3).

3.1 WHO OWNS THE COPYRIGHT?

The general rule regarding ownership of copyright is that the photographer – the creator – of a print is the owner of the copyright. The Copyright Act of 1976 reverses the presumption that the sale of a photograph carries the copyright with it. Today, unless there is a written agreement that transfers the copyright to the customer, the photographer retains the copyright. If a photographer owns the copyright, he/she also automatically owns the exclusive rights.

Case study 1.

The court case between Colten v. Jacques Marthais in America specifically extended to photography the rule that all rights in a picture belonged to the customer. The court held that the relationship between a commercial photographer and an advertising agency was no different from that between a portrait photographer and a customer.

3.2 WORKS FOR HIRE

Works considered to be works for hire are an important exception to the general rule that a photographer owns the copyright in a picture he/she has taken. If a photograph was taken by an employee on the job, the law considers the picture a work for hire, and the employee will own the copyright. However, the parties involved may avoid application of this rule if they write their contract carefully

If the employment contract itself provides, for example, that creating the copyrightable material in question is not part of the scope of employment, the employee will like to be considered the owner of the copyright and the work for hire doctrine will not apply (Duboff 1989:5).

Usually an entire newspaper or magazine is copyrighted, including all material contained in the issue. You may however for other specific contractual arrangements with your employer, or on free-lance basis. For instance, when a company hires you for an assignment, you can agree to take the job only with the stipulation that you own the negatives and transparencies, with the rights to sell the photos after the company has published the original story.

For street photographers, taking pictures on your own and then sell those photographs to a paper or magazine. You own the negatives and the copyright, as long as you did not make any other arrangements with the news agency that bought the photographs. When you sell a picture that you did not take on assignment, but rather shot on your own time with your own film, you can for several arrangements with the news agency buying the picture. As long as you form these agreements at the time of the sale. You can sell the agency one-time rights. After the newspaper or magazine publishes the photograph, you can re-sell the picture to another news outlet.

In a second type of arrangement, you can sell the picture to the news agency, giving them exclusive rights the photograph for a specified period of time.

In a third type of agreement, for even more money, you can sell your copyright. This means that only the agency has the right to distribute and sell the photograph (Kobre 1980:324)

3.3 TRANSFERRING OF LICENSING THE COPYRIGHT

A copyright owner may sell the entire copyright or any part of it, or may license any right within it. To accomplish this there must be a written document that describes the rights conveyed. The document should be signed by the copyright owner or the owner's duly authorized agent. It is not uncommon for a photographer to become the assigned or licensee of another person's copyright. This could happen when he/she wishes to incorporate another person's illustrations, writings or other works; in this case the photographer will enter into a licensing agreement with the other person.

3.4 TERMINATION OF COPYRIGHT TRANSFERS AND LICENSES

It has not been unusual for a photographer confronted with an unequal bargaining position with an ad agency or any other establishment, only to see the work become valuable at a later date. The 1976 Copyright Act, in response to this injustice, provides that after a certain period has lapsed, the photographer of certain other parties may terminate the transfer of the copyright and reclaim rights. Thus, the new Act grants the photographer a second chance to exploit work after the original transfer of the copyright. This right to terminate a transfer is called a 'termination interest'.

Case study 2:

In 1999, a lawsuit was filed by several dozen photographers against the National Geographic in the U.S. District Court, New York.

The Geographic legal case comes as a result of photographers and payment for their photographs that the National Geographic had used in the publication of its "The Complete National Geographic – 110 Years of National Geographic Magazine on CD-ROM", which includes photos taken as far back as a 100 years ago.

Ms. M. J. Jacobsen, Director of Public Affairs for the National Geographic stated that the

National Geographic Society holds the collective copyright to the magazine and that they believed that the continuing copyright permitted the Society to republish the magazine archive in CD-ROM.

On the other hand, Jim Pickerell, a stock photographer advocate believed that each photographer had a legitimate claim for compensation.

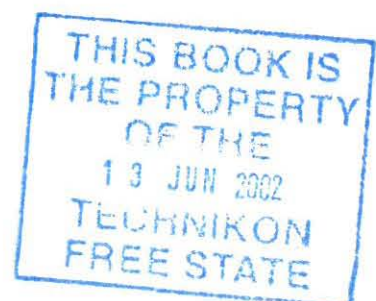
This was not the National Geographic's first lawsuit. In 1998, Florida: Douglas Faulkner, Louis Psihoyos and Matrix, unsuccessfully filed a suit for copyright infringement and breach of contract (<http://www.photosource.com/nwfebooa.html>).

3.5 WHAT CAN BE COPYRIGHTED?

The constitution permits congress to provide protection for a limited time to the 'creators': 'original works of authorship fixed in any tangible medium of expression. The 1976 Act expressly exempts from copyright protection from 'any idea, procedure, process, system, method of operation, concept, principle, of discovery'. In short, a copyright extends only to the 'expression' of creations of the mind, not to the ideas themselves.

3.6 DURATION OF COPYRIGHT

The Constitution permits Congress to grant copyright protection 'for limited times'. Under the 1976 Act, copyright exists during the life of the creator, plus 50 years. There are no renewals for copyrights created under the 1976 Act. However, the 1976 Act does provide renewals for the copyrights, which were created under the 1909 Act (Duboff 1989:8).



4. MORAL DILEMMAS OF A STREET PHOTOGRAPHER

Another aspect street photographers have to deal with in the environment is moral dilemmas.

A photographer at the scene of an accident or disaster does not have the leisure to determine if a particular picture is too gruesome or horrible to appear in a paper or book. It is part of a street photographer's responsibility to record scenes of everyday life.

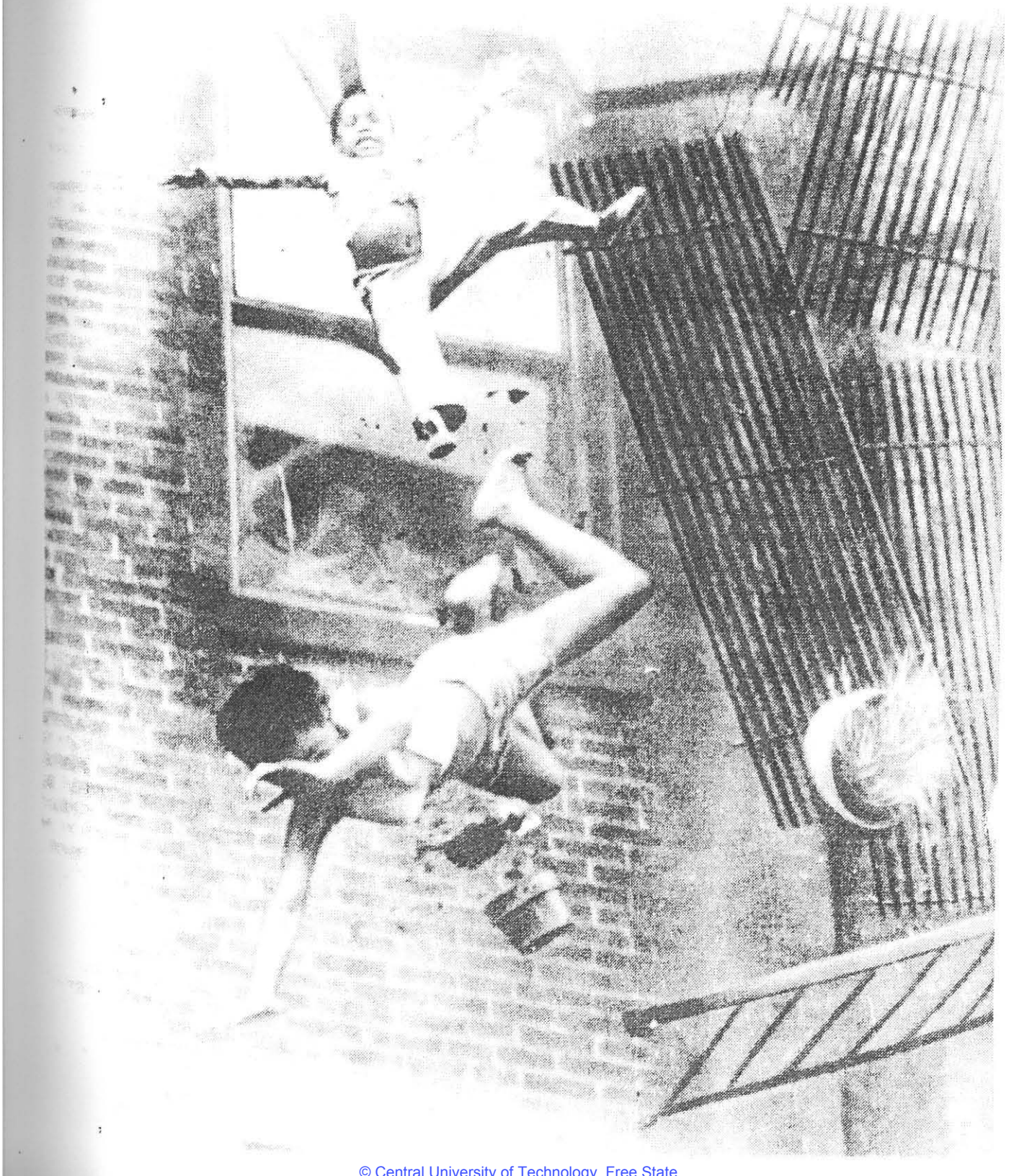
Only when the film has been developed can the photographer study images and decide what photographs are too indecent, obscene or repulsive for publication.

An example is Stanley Forman's photograph showing the sudden collapse of an iron walk balcony during a fire, plunging a woman to her death, with a child surviving miraculously, was printed on more than a hundred front pages across America. Later, telephone calls and letters to newspapers charged sensationalism, invasion of privacy, insensitivity and tasteless display of human tragedy to sell papers.

Forman's photograph won a Pulitzer Prize – but it led to a change in fire safety laws in Boston (Kobre 1980:213).

That is why a street photographer must sometimes overcome their moral dilemmas in order to create awareness of events in the everyday environment.

8.



5. LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ON PHOTOGRAPHY

Photography on street level is going to bring the average photographer in contact with day-to-day situations and in some instances: the law.

It is good to have knowledge of the law to handle certain situations correctly.

Different situations have different law. Here follows the description of the laws street photographer is submitted to during an encounter.

5.1 OBSCENE AND INDECENT PHOTOGRAPHS

The Obscene Publications Act 1959

Makes it a criminal offence, punishable by an unlimited fine or up to three years' imprisonment, for any person, to publish an obscene article or to possess an obscene article for publication or gain.

The Act defines 'obscene' articles as follows.

An article shall be deemed to be obscene if its effect is such as to tend to deprave and corrupt persons who are likely, having regard to all relevant circumstances, to read, see or hear the matter contained or embodied in it.

An 'article' includes a photograph. 'Publish' includes distributing, lending, selling, giving, hiring and offering or for sale.

'Obscenity' is not limited to material of sexually explicit nature, but includes depiction of violence too.

There is a fine line when taking nude pictures in a street photography environment. For example, the National Geographic may send photographers on assignments to photograph a recently discovered primitive tribe. If the natives walked around completely naked – then that is the way they should be presented.

When photographers covered the 1969 Woodstock, the massive outdoor rock concert, they photographed the audience dancing naked in the muddy field. But, because of the sheer size of the crowd (3000 people), it gave the activities news value (Kobre 1980:219).

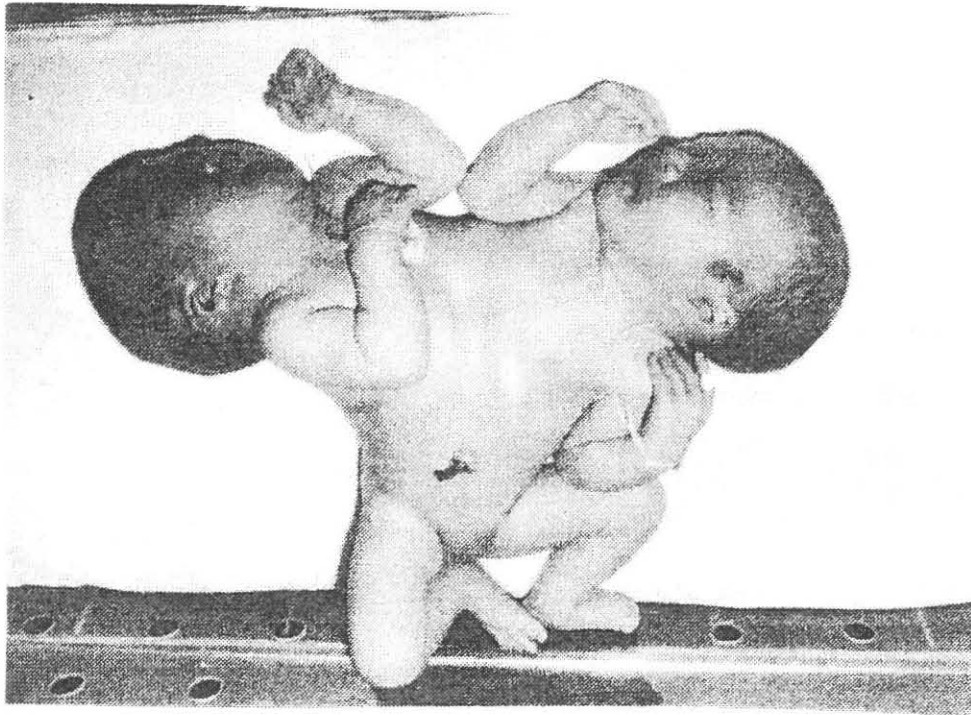
5.2 THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN ACT 1978

Although obscene photographs of children are covered by the Obscene Publications Act, the Children's Act goes further, in that it makes it an offence to take an 'indecent' photograph of a child.

On the other hand, the New York Daily News had reservations about printing pictures of Siamese Twins. The editor felt the pictures and the x-rays of these unusual abnormalities

10.

provided news information in a pictorial way without titillating the readers. (Kobre 1980:219)



5.3 THE POST OFFICE ACT 1953

It is an offence under the Post Office Act 1953 to send indecent or obscene material through the post. The maximum penalty is 12 months' imprisonment or a fine. (Berkeley: 1993:105).

5.4 PHOTOGRAPHS AT PUBLIC INCIDENTS AND DEMONSTRATIONS

Subject to the laws of trespass, a photographer is fully entitled to take photographs at any public meeting or demonstration or at the scene of any incident. However, it is an offence under the Highways Act 1959 for any person wilfully or without lawful authority to obstruct free passage along a highway.

- Obstruction of a Police Officer

To obstruct a police officer physically or any behaviour calculated to make it more difficult for a police officer to do his job, is against the law.

- Confiscation of Film or Camera

There is no law that gives a police officer or any other person the right to confiscate or wilfully damage a photographer's film or camera when taking pictures at a demonstration or major incident.

- Police Powers of Search and Seizure

A Police Officer does not have the power to search your premises or to seize your camera or film without a warrant (Berkeley 1993:105).

I hereby declare that the work contained in this mini-thesis is my own independent work and that all sources consulted or sited have been indicated in full.

Signature

Date



6. TRESPASSING

Trespassing may be to the person, to land or to goods. With goods, you may lawfully have on your premises goods belonging to another (maybe items brought to your studio for photographing). In such cases, you are in lawful possession of the good, and you may sue for trespass.

Photography on and of National Trust and Similar Property.

According to English law: Photography of any property from the public highway does not amount to a trespass; nor does it amount to a breach of privacy. The law is that you are free to photograph anything visible from the Public Highway. In the case of *Stahl v. Oklahoma* in America, several reporters were arrested for following anti-nuclear power demonstrators onto a privately owned power-plant site. The owner of the land, the Public Service Co. of Oklahoma, had denied both the public and the media access to the plant.

The court treated the plant a Government entity, because the Power Company's activities were heavily regulated by the State and Federal Government. Nonetheless, the judge fined the reporters for criminal trespass, ruling that the First Amendment does not guarantee access to property simply because it is owned and controlled by the government, not does the First Amendment protect reporters from arrest and prosecution if they have broken the law while gathering news (Dubof 1989:26).

Case study 3:

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7. THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY

The right to be protected from a wrongful invasion of privacy, largely taken for granted today, is a relatively new legal concept. The right of privacy was not suggested as a legal principle until 1890, when arguments for developing the right appeared in a 'Harvard Law Review' article, written by the late Justice Louis Brandeis and his law partner, Samuel Warren. This article, written largely because of excessive media attention given to the social life of Warren's wife. The maintained that the media were persistently 'overstepping in every direction to the obvious bounds of propriety and of decency' in violation of the individual's right to be left alone.

In America, the right to privacy is generally recognised, but the precise nature varies from State to State. Some States such as New York, Oklahoma, Utah, Virginia and California have enacted right-to-privacy statutes.

Others simply recognize the right as matter of common law. Others – Texas, Nebraska, Rhode Island and Wisconsin – expressly refuse to recognize a right to privacy.

Some of the confusion can be resolved by dividing the Right to Privacy:

- Intrusion upon another's seclusion
- Public disclosure of private facts
- Portrayal of another in a false light
- Commercial appropriation of another's name or likeness.

Street photography has a lot to do with the social issues surrounding the everyday happenings of people's lives. These events can be considered personal by the individual involved. Therefore, the street photographer must realize where overstepping the fine line into a person's private domain, begins (Duboff 1989:27).

An example of this fine line is when a Florida Times-Union photographer entered Mr. and Mrs. Fletcher's house to take pictures of the silhouette left from Cindy Fletcher's body after a fire.

The court ruled in the Fletcher's case that the news photographer was invited into the home by the police and fire marshal; no one objected to the cameraman's presence. In fact, the photographer was asked to take pictures, because the authorities needed them for their investigation and the fire marshal's camera was of film.

In the Fletcher case, the law did not recognize the invasion of privacy of the dead (Kobre 1980:309).

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The photograph of silhouette left on the floor of Cindy Fletcher's body.
(Bill Cranford, Florida Times-Union.)



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Case study 4:

An Example of 'intrusion of another's seclusion' is the court case: *Galella v. Onassis*.

Ronald Galella is a freelance photographer specializing in photographs of celebrities. The persistence and manner in which he performs his jobs are unparalleled.

For a number of years Jacqueline Onassis, Caroline Kennedy, John Kennedy Jr. and other members of the Kennedy family were among his favourite subjects. Onassis and the others were constantly confronted by Galella who used highly offensive chase scene

techniques in parks and churches, at funeral services, theatres, schools and elsewhere. One of his practices was to shock or surprise his subjects in order to photograph them in a state of surprise.

While taking these photographs, he would sometimes utter offensive or snide comments.

After hearing a wealth of evidence regarding this type of behaviour, the court, in a fairly scathing opinion, held that Galella had wrongfully intruded upon the seclusion of his subjects.

Finding monetary damages to be an inadequate remedy, the court issued a permanent injunction that prohibited Galella from getting within a certain distance from Onassis and the others (Duboff 1989:28).

But, the court did not stop Galella from taking and selling pictures of the former First Lady, as long as the pictures were used for news coverage and not advertising.



Galella photographing Jackie Onassis from a taxi window
Walking up 5th Avenue in New York.

16.

Jackie Kennedy Onassis sued Ron Galella, self-styled Paparazzo photographer, for harassment, and she won.



8. THE PHOTOGRAPHERS RIGHT TO ACCESS

As important as the photographic subject's right to privacy, is the photographer's right to take pictures and right to access.

Neither of these rights are absolute; rather, the subject's to privacy and the photographers right to take pictures are the mirror image of one another and one ends right where the other begins.

Ordinarily, you can take pictures in concert halls, theatres, museums, hospitals and nursing homes. So long as you do not infringe copyrights be doing so and so long as the institution in question has no clear rules or regulations to the contrary.

There are some statutes which prohibit photographing certain buildings or sites, such as the federal prohibiting against photographing post offices or military installations. Photojournalists tend to have somewhat more legal protection of their right of access to subjects that are newsworthy.

Newsworthy events often occur in public places. In New York City, there are several sections of the administrative code that requires permits in order to photograph in public places. Other sections of New York City's code forbid the use of tripods in public parks.

It is also important to remember that if the police order you to not enter an area in pursuit of news, you are risking arrest, prosecution and liability, by disregarding the order.

Since the legal concepts discussed are still evolving, and since their treatment varies from state to state, country to country, you as photographer would be advised to work as closely with a lawyer when a question arises regarding invasion of a right to privacy (Duboff 1989:35).

For a street photographer the right to access is very important, because if the environment prohibits him/her from taking photographs – then street photography would not exist.

9. PHOTOGRAPHY AND THE OFFICIAL SECRETS ACT

Street Photography can be described as 'casting a secret look **into** the private lives of other people'.

When seen in this light, specializing in Street Photography **can be linked** to Covert Photography and to Spying. Therefore, before undertaking **such** a direction, you have to have an idea of the laws involved in this field of work.

In 1989, England, the legislation covering Official Secrets, **underwent** drastic and long-overdue reform. Section 1 and 2 of the Official Secrets **Act 1911** – until then the prevailing law- had been rushed through Parliament, **amidst public** hysteria over National Security which dominated the period leading up to **the First World War**. However it was Section 2, which had been the focus of attacks.

Section 1 of the 1911 Act still remains in the statute book. **The more** recent legislations of 1989 will also be discussed.

SECTION 1: SPYING

Section 1 of the 1911 Act states

If any person for any purpose prejudicial to the safety of **interests** of the State:

- a) Approaches, inspects, passes over, or is in the neighbourhood of, or enters any prohibited place within the meaning of this Act, or
- b) makes any sketch, plan, model or not which is calculated **to be** or might be or is intended to be directly or indirectly useful to an enemy, or
- c) obtains, collects, records or publishes or communicates **to any other person** any secret, official code word or pass word, or any sketch, **plan, model**, article or note, or
other documents of information which is calculated **to be, or might be**, or is intended to be directly or indirectly useful to the enemy.

.....shall be guilty of an offence.

The maximum sentence is fourteen years imprisonment.

Section 2 of the 1911 Act was revised with the central objective, according to the 1988 White Paper, to obtain a better definition of when the disclosure of official information became a criminal offence

The six areas of information covered by the 1989 Official act:

Security and intelligence

Defence

International relations

Information useful to Criminals

Interception and Phone-tapping

Information entrusted in confidence to other states or international organisations

(Crone 1995:177)

The section basically states the prohibiting of any information, document or article relating to security or intelligence, which is disclosed without lawful authority by any person who is or has been

A member of the Security or Intelligence Services, or a person who has been notified by a Minister of the Crown that he is subject to the Section as if he were a member of those services.

A Crown servant or Government contractor.

(Crone 1995:179)

10. WORKING ENVIROMENT OF STREET PHOTOGRAPHERS

Another aspect of the environment of a street photographer is the conditions under which they must take their pictures.

Jacob Riis was up against many obstacles to photograph the impoverished immigrants in the New York slums. The crowded tenements he wished to capture on film were shrouded in darkness and shadows. To show the perpetual nighttime existence in the slums, Riis pioneered the use of the German “Blitzlichtpulver” – flashlight powder – which although dangerous and uncontrollable, did sufficiently illuminate the scene (Kobre 1980:12).

The flash powder was very dangerous. Photographers had to wear special cuffs so the powder would not roll down and burn their arms when the chemical was ignited. One photographer suffered a skull fracture when a big flash pan bent as it fired. Another photographer lost a hand from exploding powder as he poured it from a bottle onto a hot flash pan (Kobre 1980:19).

Another photographer faced with similar problems – only decades later – was Arthur Fellig (Weegee).

Weegee, a free-lancer, who cruised the city streets in his car, using a police radio to keep ahead of the happenings of urban nightlife. He used flash bulbs, that replaced the flash powder. The bulbs were smokeless and safe, yet large and awkward.

With the invention of the electronic flash by Harold Edgerton of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the early 1930's conditions for the photographers were greatly improved (Kobre 1980:21).

About the time of the flash bulbs, cameras were being invented to be more versatile. The Graflex, nicknamed, Big Bertha, when fitted with a telephoto lens was the basic news camera from the turn of the century to the 1920s.

In 1922, Oscar Barnack, a technician at the E. Leitz factory in Germany invented the Leica. By 1932, Leitz mass-produced the camera in fully refined form with extremely fast, removable lenses and built-in rangefinders. The ideal street photographer's tool – because of its mobility and the ability to take a picture unobtrusively (Kobre 1980:25).

CONCLUSION

This is just a short history to show the conditions early street photographers had to work under. Although the equipment got more advanced, the conditions basically stayed the same.

Human suffering never ceased, people going about, going on with their lives. Interesting events, accidents... the list is endless.

The environment of the street photographer does not always entail working with clients, but working mainly on your own.

But always keep in mind dealing with the law and – very important – overstepping the fine line between news and privacy.



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THE TECHNIQUES INVOLVED IN STREET PHOTOGRAPHY

By Rona van der Riet

An essay submitted for the subject
Visual Communication III

Faculty of Human Sciences

Technikon Free State

September 2001

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INTRODUCTION

Once the camera was liberated from the tripod and became light enough to be carried around with ease, and once it was possible to recharge or reload it almost instantly, the relationship between the photographer and the image began to change.

Photography became a form of hunting, or shooting. It was no longer necessary to place the subject in front of an immobile device or to transfer a stiffly posed, image onto a sensitive plate.

The camera could now accompany the photographer on his/her quest for fleeting images, tracking the subjects down and capturing the "decisive moment".

The camera became a weapon, worn slung across the shoulder, automatic, reloadable and capable of firing a round of shots.

A photographer must "lie and wait" for the right moment - pounce - the disappear in order to find something better and further to leave the studio and track the subjects down in the streets, along country paths and, eventually, in other continents.

The "hunting metaphor" forms part of the techniques involved in the art of Street photography. Although it's only a philosophy factor - it forms an integral part of this art (*Montier 1996: 66*).

To discuss the details of the techniques involved in street photography, I am first going to discuss the behaviour the photographer, the equipment used and techniques involved in treating the print itself.

Street photography is all about catching the moment, surprising. Catching someone in the act, not to reveal the subject - only to capture a reality. By doing just that, even an ordinary portrait of a man becomes interesting from the moustache to the folds of his overcoats (*Montier, 1996: 48*)

2. CANDID PHOTOGRAPHY

The man who first exploited the candid impression of life was Eric Salomon. Often called the 'father of candid photography'. Salomon began his photography career in 1928 with the new Ermanox camera.

Salomon's arenas were diplomatic gatherings and government functions; his subjects were the foremost statesman and political personalities of Europe.

The first of his techniques was the use of a quiet, unobtrusive camera that did not disrupt the orderly proceedings.

Another was his charm and ability to concoct some scheme to allow him to gain entry into this private world for picture making.

The ruses that Salomon used are legendary. One time he managed to take pictures in a courtroom, which was off-limits to photographers: he shot his film by cutting a hole in the crown of his hat and hiding his camera there. Following the success of this technique, he used a similar ploy to photograph a roulette game in Monte Carlo: he hollowed out several thick books and hid his camera inside. While Salomon appeared absorbed in the game, he was actually busy clicking away with his concealed camera.

There is a remarkably intimate quality to Salomon's work; because his camera enabled him to catch these prominent people off guard, rather than being an intruder, simply a watchful observer who happened to be present at the scene.

While Henry Cartier-Bresson and Athur Fellig took pictures on street on street level and Salomon in a more refined environment – they all had one thing in common: the observers of human nature (Kobre 1980:25).

The fundamental requirements for candid photography are unobtrusiveness (sometimes to the point of concealment), fast reaction to changing events, and the ability to work in existing light, however dim.

Styles of the street photographers are naturally varied, ranging from the most secretive of candid to deliberate involvement in the events that the photographer is setting out to record.

Henry Cartier-Bresson preferred to work close to his subjects but without their being aware of his presence. He carried the minimum of equipment, even taping over the chrome bodywork of his cameras to appear less obvious and adopt a quiet manner that enabled him to blend in with the scene.

Other photographers had to adopt to more extreme measures to avoid advertising their presence. To photograph the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the photographer Romano Cognoni walked around Kabul with his camera beneath a cape, only its lens, pre-focused, poking through a fold in the cloth; the shutters was released by squeezing a rubber bulb.

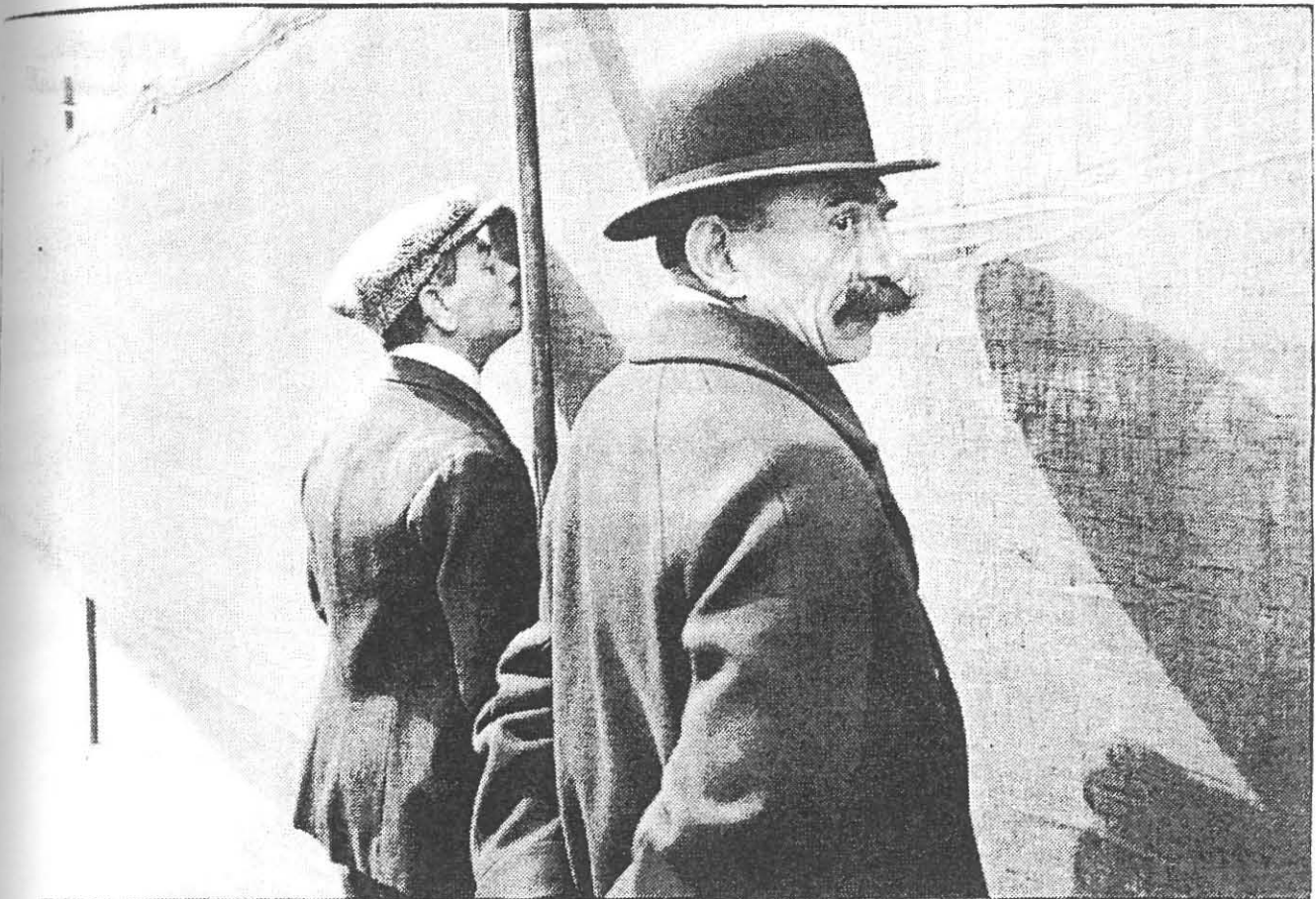
Another approach to candid photography is deliberate, sympathetic involvement: making every effort to become a part of the situation and gain the confidence of the subjects. Because of the time needed, the picture essay, pioneered by the original Life magazine and exemplified in the work of such photographers as W. Eugene Smith, whose work in the staff of the magazine in the 1950's produced examples of this type of photography (Freeman 1982:24).

These techniques will be discussed in detail.



3. TECHNIQUES INSPIRED BY HENRY CARTIER-BRESSON.

3.1 The first of Henri Cartier-Bresson's techniques was watching his subjects in the act.



Brussels, 1932

An example of this was in Brussels. Two men stand facing a strip of canvas stretched out on poles along the pavement – a device intended to keep out the gaze of curious passers-by. In deviance of this interdiction, the men take advantage of the gaps to watch some performance. One held in check by his scruples, the other is a shameless voyeur. In this image the two individuals are caught red-handed, caught in the act. We are presented with a moment never seen before and one that cannot be repeated (Montier 1996:49).

3.2 Dance of the photographer

Catching the right moment can often be jeopardized by a hesitation due to uncertainty, some physical gulf between the photographer and the unfolding event.

To overcome this Cartier-Bresson used a technique he called the 'dance of the photographer'.

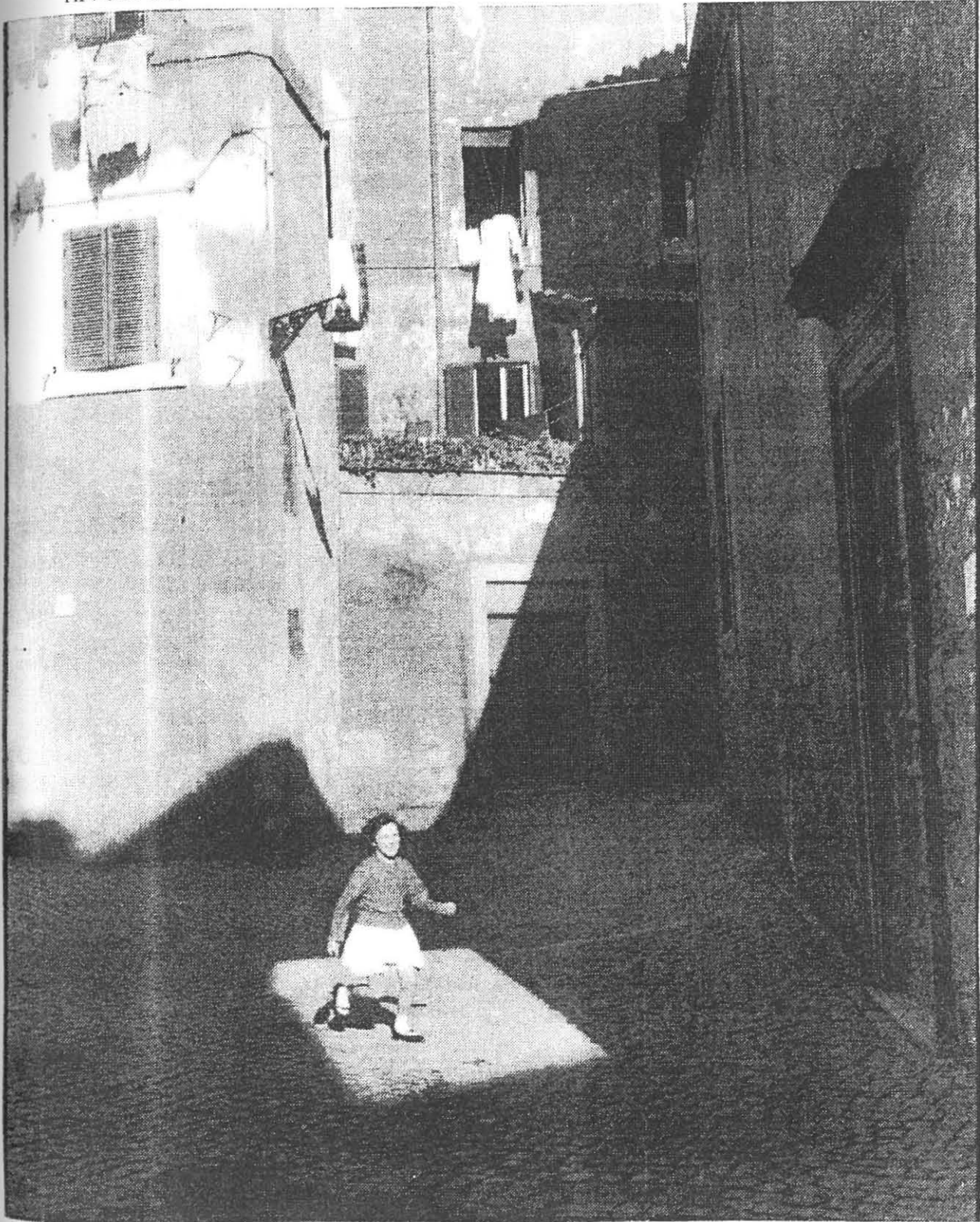
The dance of the photographer is not merely a prelude to releasing the shutter, but also a search to find an equivalent to the rhythmic structure of the visual world with one's own body – "the symbiosis between the physical resources of the photographer and the unfolding event (Montier, 1996: 49).



Dance of the Baron, Bali, 1949

In order to photograph, for instance worshippers in their trance without being seen, the photographer has to assume the same rhythm as them.

3.1 The behaviour of the photographer will mean nothing without light - the sole reason why photography was invented.



Rome, 1959

Light lives, even when subdued, it is a reminder of the continuity of life. Therefore it's important for the photographer to know how to use it. Because there is light – shadows are formed. The compositions formed by this phenomenon heightens a scene's creative elements (Montier 1996:53).

Light can seem like some sort of hole in which all our references threaten to crumble. In 1959, Rome, Cartier-Bresson captured a little girl running in a courtyard of a building, just as she places her foot in the center of a square of intense light surrounded by shadow. Like Alice about to vanish through a trapdoor into a world governed by a different set of rules (Montier 1996:53).

Cartier-Bresson preferred to work on overcast days – because it gave him the freedom to move freely around his subjects. If there is sunlight in one of his photographs, it usually falls in the background and the subjects are usually in the shade (Westerbeck 1994:154).

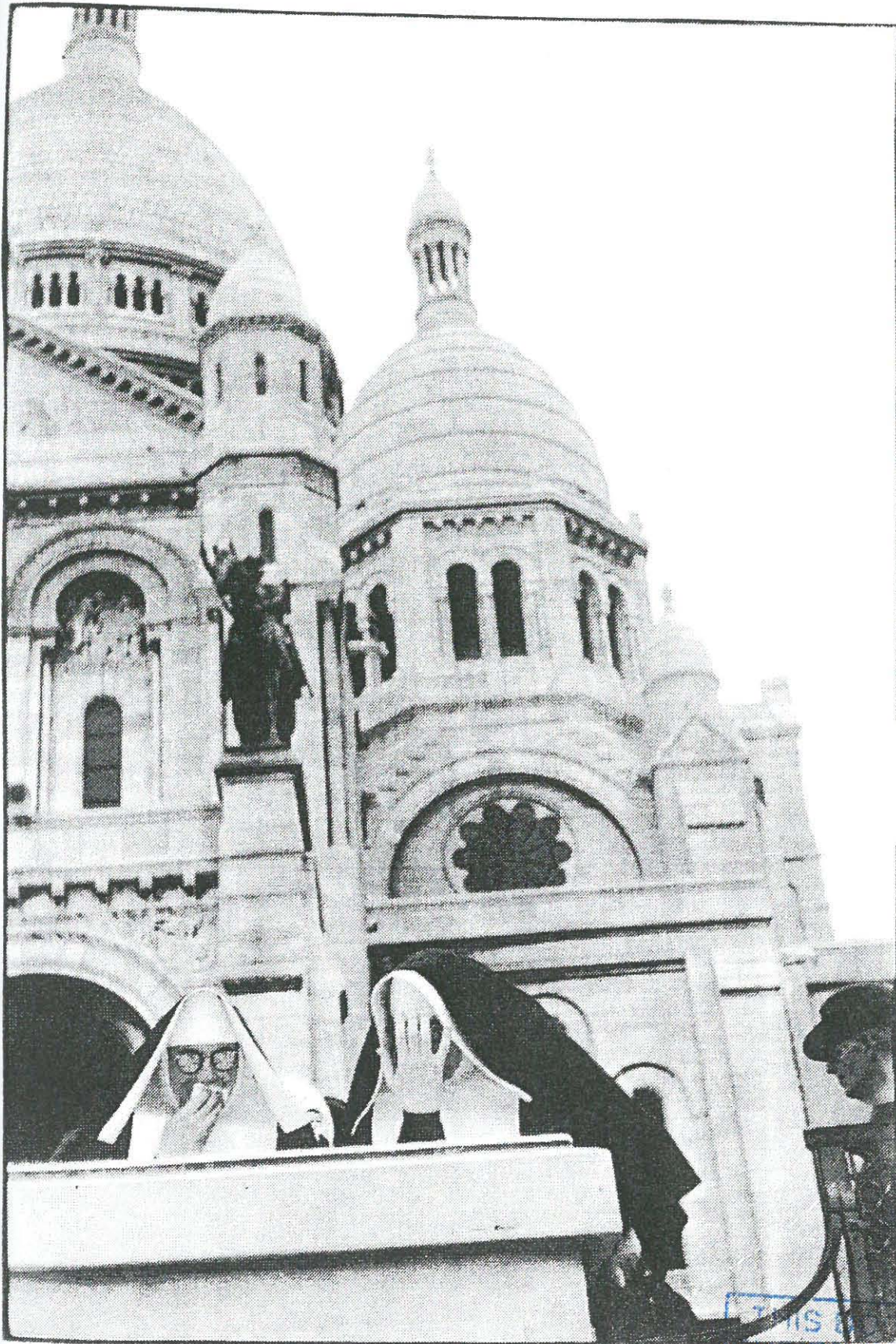
Another important factor is to make use of natural or available light according to the situation. When you are using strobes or flash, it is very difficult to be the unobserved observer.

During the recording of nightlife scenes it is a different method, because there is no natural light available and flash is needed.

3.3 Composition

Composition in Cartier-Bresson's photographs is a very interesting element – a typical Cartier-Bresson photograph does not contain a clear incident, but still there is usually a lot going on. For example a bicycle streaking past, fat man leaping into the air, etc.

This next photograph is a typical example of a Cartier-Bresson photograph that does not contain a clear incident, but the nun's antics makes it an interesting image.



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4. PHOTO ESSAY

Another method to portray street photography is with photo essays. It is just a more intense way to depict situations/ environments of everyday life.

W. Eugene Smith was famous for his photo essays. *Life* Magazine described, in 1962, his essays as 'the most memorable we ever published' (Kobre 1980:284).



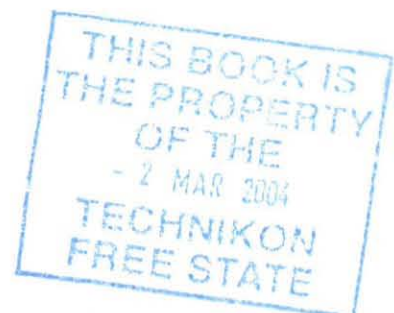
Mrs. Vermorel bathes her daughter, Tomoka who was crippled from birth by Mercury poisoning.

This is an example of W. Eugene Smith's photo essay when in 1971, he went to Japan to produce a story on Minamata, the town afflicted with mercury poisoning. A company, Chisso, had systematically dumped mercury-laden waste into the bay at Minamata, poisoning the fish, and thus in turn poisoning the townspeople who ate the fish.

His photographs show the physical effects on the victims and he documented through his photographs the fight of the victims to receive restitution payment from the company (Kobre 1980:285).

W. Eugene Smith's shooting strategy techniques.

- He did not really ever use flash or strobes, because he wished to remain the unobserved unobserver – using natural light instead.
- Because he had to stay with his subjects for up to six weeks, he had to be friendly and understanding. Trying not to intrude and careful to pull back in moments when he felt subjects were being pressed too hard.
- He did not wait very long to take photographs on assignment, because he never knew if the first one were very valid or if his idea was going to work.
- He seldom directed a photo or made his subjects pose, unless it was absolutely essential to the truth of the story.
- He had to work very quietly to remain unobserved. He sometimes had to provide additional lighting in dark rooms, e.g. photofloods, white cards on the walls to bounce the light off the reflectors, etc.
- He mostly used black and white film, because color too often produces its own emotion separate from the subjects. Color is a very strong tool of illustration, but he believed that his subjects did not lend themselves to it (Kobre 1980:302)



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4.1 PHOTO ESSAY FORMAT

For a typical photo essay, the photographer has to shoot at least eight basic types of photographs to ensure complete coverage of the situation and to guarantee enough good pictures for the layout.

1. Introductory of overall – Usually a wide-angle or aerial shot that establishes the scene.
 2. Medium – Focuses in on one activity or one group.
 3. Close-up – Zeroes in on one element, like a person's hands or an intricate detail of a building.
 4. Portrait – Usually either a dramatic, tight head shot of a person in his or her environmental setting.
 5. Interaction – People in conversation or in action.
 6. Signature – Summarizes the situation getting all the key storytelling elements in one photograph. Often called the decisive moment.
 7. Sequence – A how-to, before and after, or a series with a beginning, middle and end.
 8. Clincher – A closer that would end the story.
- (Kobre 1980:252).

Most photographers have good ideas, but sometimes find it difficult to formulate ideas into concrete picture story subjects.

Another technique for taking candid photographs was demonstrated by Constantine Manos.

He also never posed or arranged any pictures for his projector-slide show called: "Where's Boston?"

Manos explored each area of the city on foot, introducing him self to residents. He believed that if you sneaked up on people, they have the right to resent you. If they knew what you were doing, people will let you continue with your work.

Photographers have the responsibility not to offend by their presence. That is why appropriate clothing is important and it is bad when a second camera around a photographer's neck has a big impressive, fierce-looking telephoto lens. Manos seldom worked with more than one camera at a time.

With people aware of Manos's presence, he was still able to catch remarkable candid and uninhibited moments in people's lives (Kobre 1980:106).

5. MORE TECHNIQUES

From a mug shot alone, the viewer can not tell a banker from a bandit, a president from a prisoner. The wrinkles of a brow or set of the eyes reveal about the subject's past, profession of news worthiness. Enviromental details let the reader know something bout the lifestyle of the sitter.

Symbols also reinforce the theme. For example photographing a man by his piano suggests that he is involved in music.

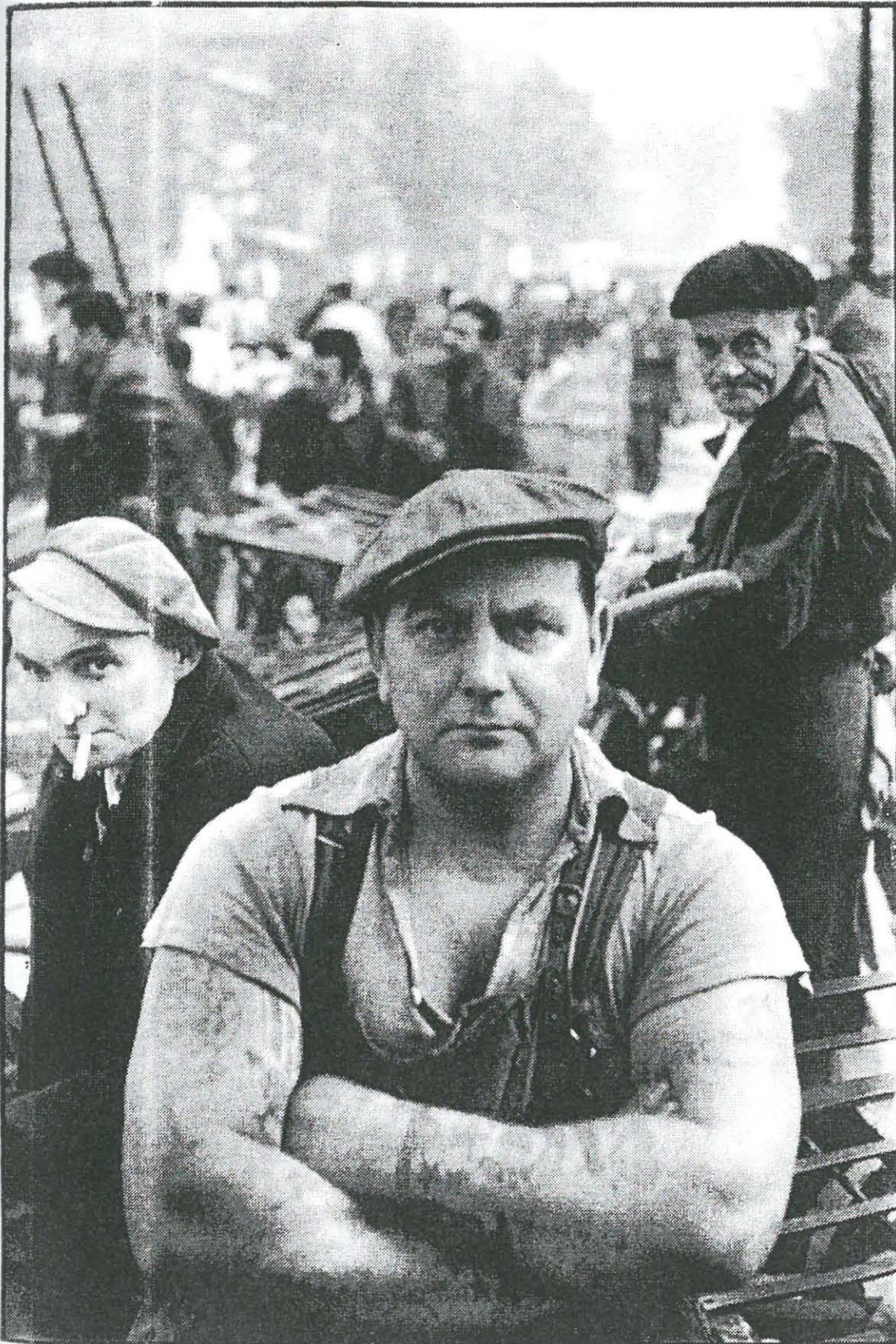
The use of a wide-angle lens is a good way to capture more background detail.

HINTS FOR CAPTURING CANDID PHOTOGRAPHS.

- You have to completely be at ease with your equipment so that you can concentrate solely on your subjects.
- Unless the camera is automatic, set the aperture and shutter speed before you point the camera at a person. If you take time to fickle with the camera's details, you might catch the attention of the subject and lose the candid moment. Take your light meter reading without the subject being aware.
- Select the appropriate lens before you bring the camera to your etc. A medium telephoto lens, 105 or 200 is usually satisfactory for candid photographs. The telephoto keeps you far enough away from your subjects to decrease your visibility.
- Swing the lens once by the subject, stopping just long enough to focus. As an alternative you might focus on an object exactly the same distance away as your subject. The telephoto lens requires critical focusing. For that reason, some photographers prefer the wide-angle lens for candids, even though the photographer must com closer to the subject. Pre-focussed at 10ft with small aperture of f16, a photographer with a 28mm lens can snap away without ever touching the focusing ring.
- Watch the subject, concentrate on the subject's expression and when it is right, swing up the lens, frame and snap away (Kobre 1980:126).

The photograph on the next page is an example of Henry Cartier-Bresson photographing his subjects without them being aware of him doing so.

This is an example of a photograph of Henry Cartier-Bresson, where the background detail gives the reader the idea of the man's profession.





Eye contact – When anyone stares directly into the camera lens, the photograph loses its candid effect.

Although eye contact between the person in the photograph and the viewer adds intimacy to head shot, the staring eye destroys the naturalness of a candid photograph (Kobre 1980:128).

The closer you are to the subject – the more dramatic the effect.

The next question usually arises: do a street photographer prefer color or black and white film? Color photographs is a very important means of information, but one that is limited as far as reproduction is concerned.

Magazines usually prefer color, favouring it for its powers of persuasion and adornment. Work done for journalistic purposes, or simply a family album is better in color - it allows a document to be identified more rapidly (Montier 1996: 72).

Black and white is full of emotion - a stylised form of the surprise and capture combined. It also serves to dramatize - the right compositions of light, shadows, peoples, lines, architecture, etc. combined (Montier, 1996: 74).

It also has a wide tonal range giving interesting depth to each photo.

The use of black and white limits the use of flash entirely - if only out of respect of the actual light.

The reproduction also holds countless possibilities of methods used to create a more interesting visual image (Montier 1996: 80).

6. THE TOOLS OF THE STREET PHOTOGRAPHER

6.1 CAMERA

The camera acts as the intermediate between the photographer and the scene he/she wants to record. Since this is only "obstruction" between photographer and subject, there is many factors and requirement involved in choosing the right camera when doing street photography.

Because unobstrusive movement is needed, large format cameras are not used.

The basic ingredients for a good street photography camera is: a small shape, a quiet shutter, easy to handle and understand and easy to reload.

a) The single lens reflex cameras

The modern Single Reflex cameras are portable and extremely adaptable, and it is the most popular cameras available.

One of the advantages is that when you look through the viewfinder of a SLR - what you see is what the camera "sees". This is important since composition is very important, and you don't want to spoil it by indirect placement.

A wide range of lenses and other equipment is available and easy to obtain (Freeman, 1998:11).

b) The Rangefinder Cameras

This type of Camera is very popular among professional photographers. The most famous brand of rangefinder is the Leica (also used by Henri Cartier- Bresson in almost all his work) (Freeman 1998:11).

In contrast to the SLR Camera, the rangefinder allows the subject to be seen through a separate viewfinder, rather than through the lens.

In the center of the viewfinder are two images. When the lens is focused on the subject these two images become aligned with another and the picture will then be sharp. The method of working is preferred by some photographers who find the camera quieter to operate and is less prone to be affected by vibration as there is no mirror to flip up.

Although the rangefinder does not have quite as wide a range of accessories as the SLR, it is a sturdy and reliable camera with extremely high-quality lenses (Freeman, 1998:11).

The ideal Street photography Camera.

c) The Twin-Lens Reflex

The TLR employs two lenses, both mounted on a moveable panel, one above the other.

The viewfinder is situated on top of the camera and can be seen through the groundglass screen.

The great advantage of the TLR is its combination of compactness and generous viewfinder.

Because the camera can be held unobtrusively without anyone suspecting the camera. The shutter is also very quiet. Negatives make fairly large contact prints, and picture can be cropped in the enlarger.

The main disadvantages of this camera is: because it has two lenses – the equipment is very expensive and the range of accessories is limited (Hedgecoe 1976: 36).

6.2 LENSES

A wide range of lenses are available. But for street photographic purposes, I would suggest a long telephoto/zoom lens to capture details and be placed a distance away from the scene as not to be seen.

A portrait lens works well for close-up images. Wide angle lenses works very well for creative composition, but is also used capture the whole scene at closer quarters (Hedgecoe, 1976:36).

For a street photographer to remain unobtrusive, the choice of lenses is very important.

Long focal lengths, which magnify the image and can be used from a distance, are very popular. With a 150mm lens fitted to the camera, a standing figure, 12,2m away will fill a horizontal frame, making this a similar focal length very useful for street photography.

Even longer focal lengths, such as 300mm or 400mm can give close candid views with only a small chance of being noticed, although holding a large lens steady by hand takes practice.

At the other extreme, very wide angle lenses also have their place in candid photography, because the angle of view may be much wider than people close to the camera may not realize that they are included in the picture (Freeman 1982:24).

6.3 ACCESSORIES

a) Lens Hood

This should be bought at the same time as the camera to prevent stray light from entering the lens. Since street photography is so unpredictable, you never know in what situation you might find yourself.

b) Tripods

Not very important, since you move around and movement should not be constricted by your equipment, but it is useful to allow exposures at slow shutter speeds – which might be necessary because of dim light, slow film, a small lens aperture or a combination of all these factors which may occur while shooting a scene on the street. Lightweight models can be strapped to the side of the shoulder bag (Freeman 1982:81).

c) Exposure meters

Although most cameras now have some sort of built-in mechanism for evaluating exposures, a separate handheld exposure meter is very useful (Freeman, 1998: 18).

6.4 FILM

One type of film will not suit all kinds of photography. It is important to select a film based on lighting and subjects you wish to capture on film.

Here are the uses according to ISO ratings:
(www.allsands.com/hobbies.htm).

ISO 100 – This film is best for sunny shots, outdoor settings. Landmarks, scenic views, still subjects, floral shots, architecture, vibrant colour, and when you want to see sharp details of your subject.

ISO 200 – The very versatile film with medium to fine grain. It enlarges fairly well with colour reproduction. For inside photos with flash, overcast outdoor shots and moderate action.

ISO 400 – For fast action photography, low lighting situations, pictures taken inside using a flash, and sporting events.

ISO 800 – 1000 – Most lighting condition, action, sporting, low light situations, artistic effect for portraits or nude photographs.

Fast, fine grain films are the ideal type film for street photography.

Extra-fast film enables you to freeze action, and get good depth of field. You can shoot in poor light conditions, or obtain really grainy results.

Fast, high contrast films will give you good, bright results when used in overcast conditions (Hedgecoe 1976:172).

a) Filters – Although you do not need to use light balancing filters for black and white film, some colored filters can add interest to your images.

Yellow filter – Darkening of a blue sky and make the clouds stand out sharply. A red filter will exaggerate the effect.

Infrared film is also very handy for low-light conditions and interesting, creative effects. Special films with ratings as high as 800 ASA can be found (Freeman 1998).



A wide range of techniques can be used to enhance dull images.

a) Burning-in techniques

(Ephraums 1995:11)

The most common toner is sulphur toner, which uses bleach and a re-developing method to produce a sepia finish. The finer the grain of the print, the warmer the final tone will be, so that for the richest results, a blue-black silver bromide print is best.

Variations in the sepia tone are possible and sepia toning can be used in conjunction with other toning baths, such as gold toning (Freeman 1982:178).

CONCLUSION

Although there are no formal Techniques involved in street photography, the photographer must always be sure of the focusing quality, exposure, etc. The basic elements of good photographs.

There is also a fine line between street photography and photojournalism. But street photography focuses more on the candid human elements. How people react to certain situations in their everyday lives.

Street photographers also have a responsibility towards 'history'. One of these aspects is to 'convey to the world'. The street photographer is a committed spectator, a witness to scenes (Montier 1996:153).

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EXAMPLES OF OWN WORK

By Rona van der Riet

An essay submitted for the subject
Visual Communication III

Faculty of Human Sciences

Technikon Free State

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INTRODUCTION

This is the selection of my own Street photographs. Each one is different in events, people and personal meaning.

I used a Pentax MZ-5N camera and a standard 50mm lens during the taking of all the photographs. Next I would like to invest in a wide-angle lens, because I prefer my photographing equipment to be as compact as possible. This will enable me to come up close to my subjects and still be able to 'get the whole picture'. Sometimes when you are so close to subject with a wide-angle lens, they do not think or realise you are actually photographing them.

A small camera bag, just big enough to accommodate only the basic equipment. This is all necessary to stay unobtrusive.

A street photographer cannot walk around with bulky tripods and other equipment. I had to learn to be resourceful. Except for the basic candid techniques, there is other finer techniques you can only learn through experience. For example, during long exposures – how to handle the camera to prevent camera shake. Or, like Henry Cartier-Bresson, conceal all the shiny chrome parts on the camera body. I am totally inspired by his work. His every photograph has a streak of pure genius.

I really prefer street photography, the always-changing environment and new extraordinary face and situations. And, of course the promise of travelling.

Here follows a few examples of my own work.

PLATE 1: THE ARTIST

The photograph of the portrait artist was taken in Montmatre, Paris. It was taken at f8 with a shutter speed 60/sec, since it was an overcast day. (Kodak 200).

By positioning the artist and his easel on both sides of an imaginary centre, a balance was created to define the composition of the image. The repetition of his face and the face of his 'sitter' made it an amusing composition for me.

It is a interesting street scene: candid and not posed. An interesting man advertising his talent in order to make money to support himself or maybe just a part-time hobby to keep himself amused.

The green umbrellas forms an almost monochromatic background in this composition. The background also forms colour layers: the green of the umbrellas, the yellow and the brown colours of the bricks. It is an interesting concept, although not distracting from the main feature: the artist.

By going up close to the artist and his easel, I was able to create minimum depth of field – slight blurring of the background to draw the eye to the details of the main focal point.

The easel and drawing equipment act as props and introduces a informal element into the composition. The artist also look relaxed, not posed, while smoking his cigarette.

PLATE 1: THE ARTIST

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4.

PLATE 2 CHILDPLAY

This photograph was taken at an open air modelling competition. I thought it was the most ironic situation with the two young girls playing on the railings in the foreground; the models in the background.

The two girls: carefree and not a care if their hair gets messed up, no feelings of selfconsciousness or what the other girls might say.

The models on the other hand have to dress according a certain way, walk right, sit in a certain manner – everything according to rules.

Children can become totally absorbed in what they are doing, and I think this photograph portrays this very fact.

This was taken with a colour film, Fuji 100. But it was printed digitally in black and white, because if printed in colour, the photograph would have become too busy and distracting. Luckily it was a mildly overcast day, so I could move freely around the subjects, without worrying about the position of the sun. The photograph was taken at f8, 60/sec.

I think this photograph is spontaneous and has got a genuine candid feel.

PLATE 2: CHILDPLAY



6.

PLATE 3:
UNTITLED

This was a successful candid photograph taken at the Bloemfontein Waterfront. I used XP2 film at f11, 125/sec. I like to use XP2 film because it has got such a wide tonal range. It is not the same as conventional black and white film, but it also gives atmosphere to the photograph.

This photograph makes you look twice. First of all is the look on the little girl's face, a look of total absorption. It makes you wonder what she is finding so amusing. The reaction of her father is also an interesting and contrasting one. Maybe he injured his arm the previous day and babysitting was not on his day-off agenda?

The repetition of the different lines of the image is also an interesting factor in this image.

This is a real life situation with genuine expressions.

7.

PLATE 3: UNTITLED

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9.

PLATE 4: UNTITLED



PLATE 5:
BOY ON SALE

I took this photograph of the little boy in Bloemfontein Town Centre. By changing the angle of view, the whole composition and meaning of the image changed. This added a creative element to the image and creating a stronger composition. Standing close to the one element of a photograph adds extra emphasis on the object and leads the eye to the main focal point, this being the boy.

I chose black and white for this photograph, because of its simplistic, street photography feel. If I had used colour, the different colours of the hats would have become too distracting. I used Fuji 100 (f11, 60/sec – with flash) to obtain fine grain. (Changing from colour to black and white digitally).

This photograph almost looks as if the little boy was also for sale from where he sat. This adds to the creative element of the photograph.

11.

PLATE 5: BOY ON SALE



12.

PLATE 6:

PORTRAIT OF A BOY

This photograph can be seen as portraiture, but with a street photography feel to it. By using Ilford125 black and white film, the photograph obtains a documentary value, without missing out on the detail.

The few background detail, slightly blurred is an important factor – it provides information about the subject while at the same time adding extra interest and detail as to what the image is all about. The same information is conveyed by the boy's uniform, which tells the viewer that the subject is an entertainer of some kind.

By going close-up you can see the detail of his face and uniform and creates a simplistic effect.

It is an interesting and innocent portrait.

13.

PLATE 6: PORTRAIT OF A BOY



14.

PLATE 7:

CHRISTMAS GIRLS

I took this photograph on Christmas day in the middle of nowhere on the Drakensberg Mountain pass. We were driving by when I saw the identically dressed girls and their mother, standing beside the road, waiting for a lift of some kind.

We stopped and I got out to photograph them, when the youngest of the two girls got terrified of the camera and started crying.

It was just perfect, the young girl hiding behind her slightly braver sister.

The background in this image is simple and not distracting but at the same time adds colour to the composition. The depth of field allows emphasis on the girls.

When taking portraits, viewpoint is always important. The slightest change can alter emphasis: in this case the emphasis on the terrified younger sister. To create this effect I had to keep the camera low in order to create the brave front effect of the older of the two girls.

The lighting is also not too harsh – still allowing shadow detail in their faces even though they were wearing hats. It was still early morning, so the sunlight was mild, a shutter speed of 125/sec and a f-stop of f8 could be used, on Kodak 200ASA film

The identical dresses and hats created a unity of the photograph.

15.

PLATE 7: CHRISTMAS GIRLS



16.

PLATE 8:
ZAMBIA

This photograph was taken in Zambia at the border post on the way to Zimbabwe. It was almost midday, so the sun was quite harsh, but it also brought out the colourful African colours of the woman's dress. Exposure of f11, 125/sec on a Kodak 200 ASA film was used.

I like the different lines in this photograph. From the diagonal lines on her skirt, to the block on the shirt, back to the diagonal line made by the position of her arms. The blur of her one hand, together with the colours, gives the photograph a vibrant feel. There is also no eye contact, because the photograph is candid and they were not aware of me at that moment.

The man in the background is a strange element, because it draws the viewer's eye from her to him and back again – giving the image an almost sinister feel.

I think the photograph has a real African, almost domestic feeling to it.

PLATE 8: ZAMBIA

17.



18.

PLATE 9:

OOM KOOS

This photograph of Oom Koos was taken in the city centre of Bloemfontein using XP2 film at f5.6, 125/sec using flash.

I had to use flash because of the dark corner he sat in. The effect of the fill-in flash worked well to create the right effect, to portray the harshness of his situation. You can clearly see the dirt under his fingernails and the detail of his face and dirty beard. It is not a candid picture, but one that tells a story. From the cardboard saying 'help' to the little Bible he is holding up. The little Bible is also an informative prop, because it shows his name and the fact that he has or had a telephone at some stage in his life.

The unusual angle of view also works well with the image, not just a straight frontal portrait.

This is a photograph that makes you think about the man, if he is a homeless and penniless person. It makes one wonder what happened to Oom Koos to put him in the situation where he is today.

PLATE 9: OOM KOOS

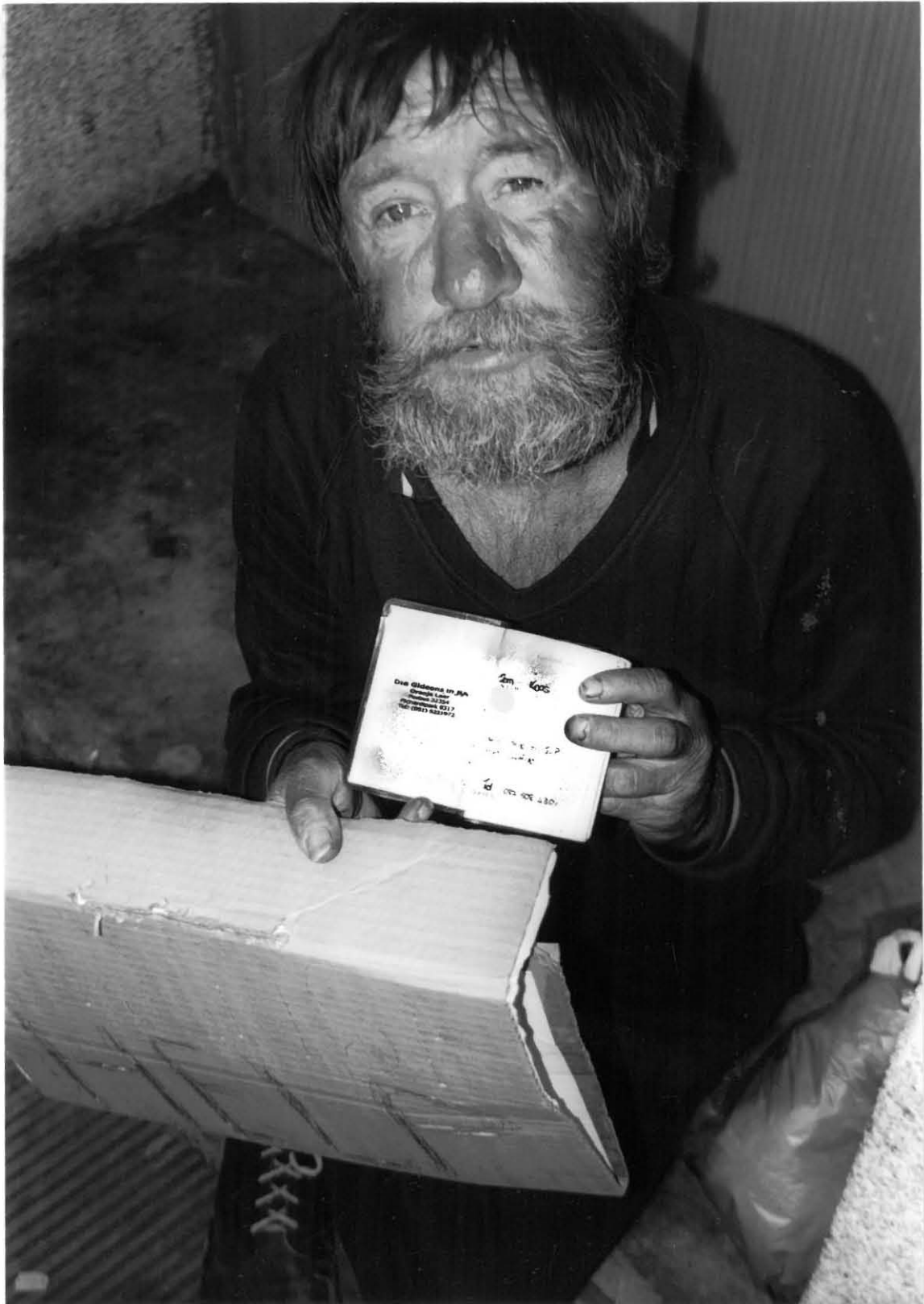


PLATE 10:

DRUMMERBOYS

I photographed these boys playing their drums at the old Bloemfontein jail. I like this photograph because of the composition of the figures leading you into the image. The blur caused by the movement of their hands gives life the image.

I used Ilford 125ASA. It was mid afternoon, so the shutter speed was 125/sec – fast enough to give just the right exposure and slow enough to allow blur. Luckily the boys stood playing in the shadow, so there were no blown-out parts on the figures itself, although the blown-out background works well to create a non-disturbing effect.

The drums and items lying around adds extra visual interest to the image. The diagonal lines of the drums and boys keeps the eyes moving forward and back again.

I like this photograph because it radiates warmth and humour.

CONCLUSION

As seen in my collection of photographs, I prefer working in black and white, rather than colour. This is because street scenes can become very busy. By using black and white you can focus on the main focal point and not be distracted by colour, etc. Black and white photographs are very simplistic in their documentary value.

Composition is also important to me – I like to have my elements and subjects arranged in such a way as to lead the eye through the picture.

Another factor is the story behind the image. Sometimes, during candid photographing, there is no way to find out what that person's situation is and why she is crying or why he is dressed that way.

But it is important for me to have my photographs tell a story – even if it is just the expression in a boy's eyes or a tear running down a little girl's face.